

WETHERSFIELD TOURISM COMMISSION
Meeting: Tuesday April 28, 2009 at 5:30 p.m.
Town Manager's Conference Room
MINUTES

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:34 p.m. by Vice Chair Chris Traczyk.

Roll Call/Attendance (5 required for quorum):

Member Name	Present	Absent	Excused
Charlie Forsdick, Chair			✓
Chris Traczyk, Vice Chair	✓		
Shireen Aforismo			✓
Jenna Delay	✓		
Charles Ford	✓		
Carol Hall	✓		
Dorcas McHugh	✓		
Geraldine Munroe	✓		
Elaine St. Onge	✓		
Katie Sullivan	✓		

Also present: Peter Gillespie, Town Planner

Public Comments: None

Approval of Minutes: March 31, 2009 - Chris Traczyk asked if there were corrections needed for the draft minutes. Two minor corrections were requested.

Motion: Elaine St. Onge motioned to approve the minutes as amended.

Second: Katie Sullivan seconded the motion.

Vote: 8 - 0 - 0

Minutes approved as amended.

Announcements/ Introductions: None.

Reports:

- **Budget – 08-09 status, 09-10 proposed** - Chris Traczyk relayed from Peter Gillespie that in recent budget discussions, he emphasized the importance of distributing the Historic

Wethersfield brochure and printing more in the winter of 2010. He also emphasized the need to maintain the Tourism website. It was decided that the proposed budget would remain as proposed, except adding \$250 for website maintenance, and make a request to unfreeze unspent funds from the 2009 budget.

- **Central CT Culture & Tourism Commission** – Geraldine Munroe said that she had not received an update from the Commission. She said she understands the Commission is in disarray at the moment due to layoffs and budget shortfalls.
- **Economic Development and Improvement Commission** – Dorcus McHugh did not have an update available at the time of the meeting.
- **GHC&VB, Potential Events** - Carol Hall said that the latest event schedule shows that booking activity is up a little. However, none of the events appeared to have much relevance to Wethersfield Tourism. Dorcus McHugh said that Riverfront Recapture will be running their Dragon Boat Race again. She said that the Cove would be a natural for cruises from the event, but there is no dock currently for unloading passengers. She also said the trolley would be a natural to bring people from Hartford to Wethersfield, but there is no money for the trolley. Charlie Ford said that partnering with Riverfront Recapture may be difficult, since they received a chilly reception from Wethersfield when riverfront activities started some years ago.
- **Grants** – Chris Traczyk said that Peter Gillespie confirmed that the state contract for the strategic marketing plan is set to expire in June. Mr. Gillespie is going to work on arranging for a 9 month extension. Mr. Gillespie also confirmed that the Historical Society was approved to be the grant awardee.
- **Progress Reports – Wayfinding Signage** – Chris Traczyk said that the request for proposal has been drafted for the wayfinding signage. She said that Peter Gillespie is putting together specifications on aluminum and plastic signs. The plan is to have the RFP out to bid by the end of May, so a contractor can be selected in June, and awarded the contract in October. The work would be done in the winter of 2010.
- **375th Anniversary Committee** – Chris Traczyk said that there was no activity to report, other than the library literary event had occurred since the last Commission meeting. Elaine St. Onge said that the Historical Society held a tribute to first responders. Charlie Ford said that he had information on a garden tour event that he would get to Jenna Delay to post on the website.
- **Web Site Update** - Jenna Delay said that website hits were rising according to the usual seasonal pattern, but they are still not as high as previous years. She said that there was a spike in the last few weeks that coincides with an e-mail announcement that went out about the upcoming Farmer's Market.

Old Business:

- **Farmers Market** – Jenna Delay distributed an example flyer. It had a logo designed by Wethersfield High School marketing students. She said she is working on getting a banner, and does not yet know the cost. She also will be checking on what signs can be posted and for how long. Dorcus McHugh said that the Zoning Board of Appeals would be in charge of deciding signage issues like that. Ms. Delay said that she is working on putting up promotional signs at the Town Hall and the Nature Center.

Ms. Delay said that she and some students will be marching in the Memorial Day parade to promote the market. She said that promotional magnets and flyers will be passed out. Seed packets from Hart Seed will be stapled to the brochures. Charlie Ford asked if the horse and carriage or the trolley would be running as in previous years, but Chris Traczyk said that there is no funding to hire them.

Ms. Delay said that 9 vendors are signed up for the Market. Some of the goods to be sold include produce, honey, roasted coffee and eggs.

Geraldine Munroe asked what publicity is planned for the event. Jenna Delay said that an article had appeared in the Post. She also said she had been interviewed by the Wethersfield Life for its mid-May issue, and by the Mayor's Corner television show. Katie Sullivan suggested that an announcement be posted on the Channel 14 public service announcement "crawler." Geraldine Munro suggested that the state legislators representing the Town put in for a proclamation.

- **Stakeholder Meeting;** - May 14 @ 8:30 am. Chris Traczyk said that Peter Gillespie will be sending out confirmation notices about this meeting.
- **Recording Secretary** – Chris Traczyk announced that the current recording secretary, Kevin Sullivan, has resigned his position and tonight's meeting will be his last. Mr. Sullivan said that from what he has seen as secretary for several commissions, the Tourism Commission members are among the hardest working in Town, and they provide the Town with a lot marketing services for free. They should be proud of themselves and the Town is very lucky to have them.

New Business:

- **Banner Purchase** – Chris Traczyk suggested that the Commission consider putting some of its funds toward banners for the Farmer's Market and the 375th Anniversary. She said that if printing prices are lower than budgeted, there may be enough money to put toward the banners.

Motion: Katie Sullivan motioned to put Commission funds, if available, toward the purchase of banners for the Farmer's Market and the 375th Anniversary.

Second: Dorcus McHugh seconded the motion.

Vote: 8 - 0 - 0

Motion approved.

- **Future Meeting Dates** – Chris Traczyk asked whether the Commission should meet less frequently, given that budget constraints will reduce the Commission’s activity. Elaine St. Onge asked how many meetings are required to be held, and Chris Traczyk said none. Katie Sullivan asked if meetings should be held only as needed, and Chris Traczyk suggested meeting quarterly. Charlie Ford suggested that a meeting be held in May, so the results of the stakeholder meeting could be discussed. He also suggested that meetings be held only as needed during the summer.

Motion: Katie Sullivan motioned to hold the May meeting as scheduled, then suspend meetings until September, except that meeting dates should be held open in case meetings are needed for urgent matters.

Second: Dorcus McHugh seconded the motion.

Vote: 8 - 0 – 0

Motion approved.

- **Scarecrows on Main St. Dates** – Charlie Ford said that he understands that the event dates are proposed to be different this year. He said the event has run for the last 13 years the same way, starting on the last weekend in September and goes 4 weeks. He said the proposal is for the event to run only 3 weeks, by starting one week later than in years past. He expressed concern because the traditional 4 week schedule has already been distributed to bus tour operators, some statewide publications and included in the 375th Anniversary event schedule. The consensus of group discussion was that the Scarecrows event would be better if it ran according to its traditional 4 week schedule, and the matter should be discussed and resolved at the Stakeholders meeting.

Follow Up Items: None.

Correspondence: None.

Next Meeting Date: May 26, 2009 at 5:30 PM, Town Manager’s Conference Room.

Call to Adjourn:

Motion: Katie Sullivan motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:27 p.m.

Second: Carol Hall seconded the motion.

Vote: 8 - 0 – 0

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kevin T. Sullivan
Commission Recording Secretary